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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 STR-07 ACDA-12
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P R 231103Z FEB 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6018
INFO EC COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 1274

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC SOPN DA
SUBJ: PRESS LEAKS AT EC MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

REF: (A) COPENHAGEN 1077 (B) COPENHAGEN 1096 (C) COPENHAGEN 1094
(D) COPENHAGEN 1078 (E) COPENHAGEN 1124 (F) COPENHAGEN 1120

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE FEB 14 EC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING HERE, UK FOREIGN MINISTER DAVID OWEN COMPLAINED ABOUT THE "COMMUNITY TENDENCY" TOWARD INFORMAPON LEAKS TO THE PRESS (REFE). SUCE A COMPLAINT IS HARDLY UNPRECEDENTED. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT OWEN AND OTHERS HAVE IN THE PAST DEPLORED THE LACK OF CONFIDENTIALITY ABOUT EC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, ESPECIALLY WHEN PRESS LEAKS REVEALED SENSITIVE INFOR-MATION AND/OR NEEDLESSLY EXPOSED DISUNITY AMONG THE PRINCIPALS ATTENDING THE MEETINGS.

2. WE HAVE REVIEWED THE FEB 14 MEETING IN ORDER TO COMPARE THE DANES' PRIVATE ACCOUNT TO US OF WHAT OCCURRED (REFS A, B, C) WITH WHAT THE PRESS WAS TOLD (REFS D, E, F). WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESS WAS INDEED PRIVY TO THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE MINISTERS' DISCUSSIONS.

3. THE EXCEPTIONS:
- THE DECISION TO CONSULT WASHINGTON ON IMPROVING THE NNA PRO-POSAL FOR THE BELGRADE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT (REF A) AND,
- THE DETAILS OF FONMIN OWEN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN

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RHODESIA AND HIS REMARKS ABOUT MUZEREWA (REF B).

4. EXCEPT FOR THOSE TWO POINTS, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MINISTERS' DISCUSSION STRUCK US AS INFORMATION WHICH WAS APPROPRIATELY SHARED WITH THE PRESS.

5. AS FOR THE REVELATIONS OF DISAGREEMENTS AMONG THE MINISTERS, IT PRESUMABLY SURPRISED NO ONE THAT THE DANISH AND BRITISH MINISTERS HELD DISPARATE VIEWS REGARDING MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. ON THE OTHER HAND, GUIRINGAUD'S TABLING A NEW PROPOSAL FOR A BELGRADE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT DID CATCH THE OTHER EIGHT OFF GUARD AND SUBSEQUENTLY EMBARRASSED THEM WHEN THE FRENCH QUICKLY PLAYED THEIR HAND IN BELGRADE. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE OTHER EIGHT HOWEVER, WERE NOT EXPOSED AS A RESULT OF A LEAK, BUT RATHER BY VIRTUE OF A FULLY-SCORED DRAMATIC GESTURE BY GISCARD.

5. IN SUMMARY, AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE FEB 14 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IS CONCERNED, IT APPEARS TO US THAT WHAT MINISTERS TOLD THE PRESS WAS ABOUT RIGHT.
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